AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. - 17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently amended) A chemically modified double stranded short interfering nucleic acid molecule that mediates RNA interference, wherein:

a) the double stranded nucleic acid comprises a sense strand and an antisense strand;

b) each strand is 18 to ~~27~~ 24 nucleotides in length, and ~~18~~ 17 to 23 nucleotides of each strand are complementary to each other~~, and at least 18 nucleotides of the antisense strand are complementary to a target RNA sequence~~;

c) the sense strand includes a terminal cap moiety at its 5'- and 3'-ends and the antisense strand includes a terminal cap moiety at its 3'-end; and

d) 10 or more pyrimidine nucleotides of the sense strand and antisense strand are chemically modified with 2'-deoxy, 2'-O-methyl, or 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro nucleotides.

19. The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein said double stranded nucleic acid molecule comprises no ribonucleotides.

20. The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein said double stranded nucleic acid molecule comprises one or more ribonucleotides.

21. - 32. (Canceled)

33. The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein one or more pyrimidine nucleotides present in the sense strand are 2'-O-methyl pyrimidine nucleotides.

34. The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein one or more purine nucleotides present in the sense strand are 2'-deoxy purine nucleotides.

35. The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein one or more pyrimidine nucleotides present in the sense strand are 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro pyrimidine nucleotides.

36. The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein one or more pyrimidine nucleotides present in said antisense strand are 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro pyrimidine nucleotides.

37. The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, wherein one or more purine nucleotides present in said antisense strand are 2'-O-methyl purine nucleotides.

38. A composition comprising the double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.

39. The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 18, comprising 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, or 10 phosphorothioate internucleotide linkages.

40. (New) A chemically modified double stranded short interfering nucleic acid molecule that mediates RNA interference, wherein:

a) the double stranded nucleic acid comprises a sense strand and an antisense strand;

b) each strand is 18 to 24 nucleotides in length, and 17 to 23 nucleotides of each strand are complementary to each other;

c) the sense strand includes a terminal cap moiety at its 5'- and 3'-ends and the antisense strand includes a terminal cap moiety at its 3'-end; and

d) 10 or more pyrimidine nucleotides of the sense strand or antisense strand are chemically modified with 2'-deoxy, 2'-O-methyl, or 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro nucleotides.

41. (New) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 40, wherein said double stranded nucleic acid molecule comprises no ribonucleotides.

42. (New) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 40, wherein said double stranded nucleic acid molecule comprises one or more ribonucleotides.

43. (New) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 40, wherein one or more pyrimidine nucleotides present in the sense strand are 2'-O-methyl pyrimidine nucleotides.

44. (New) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 40, wherein one or more purine nucleotides present in the sense strand are 2'-deoxy purine nucleotides.

45. (New) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 40, wherein one or more pyrimidine nucleotides present in the sense strand are 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro pyrimidine nucleotides.

46. (New) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 40, wherein one or more pyrimidine nucleotides present in said antisense strand are 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro pyrimidine nucleotides.

47. (New) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 40, wherein one or more purine nucleotides present in said antisense strand are 2'-O-methyl purine nucleotides.

48. (New) The double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 40, comprising 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, or 10 phosphorothioate internucleotide linkages.

49. (New) A composition comprising the double stranded nucleic acid molecule of claim 40 and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.